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Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service



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Providing information to the Cargo and Shipping industries on the latest AQIS developments

✦ AFAS India Implementation Date Moved to September 2006

The Australian Fumigation Accreditation Scheme (AFAS) for India will now be implemented on **1 September 2006**. Previous advice to industry had indicated that AFAS would be implemented on 1 July 2006. The delay comes at the request of the Indian government, which wanted to make sure that all companies seeking AFAS accreditation have the opportunity to complete the necessary training.

The implementation will bring India into alignment with the other AFAS countries, namely Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. Under AFAS, AQIS will only accept fumigation certificates from Indian treatment facilities with a fumigation date of 1 September 2006 or later if they are valid and are from a company on the List of Acceptable Indian Treatment Providers.

The Indian Department of Agriculture and Cooperation (DoAC) will maintain a register of accredited methyl bromide treatment providers. Companies on the register have demonstrated their capacity to perform methyl bromide treatments in accordance with Australian fumigation standards.

AQIS has used the DoAC Register to develop a list of acceptable Indian treatment providers for import clearance activities. This list will be periodically updated on the website www.aqis.gov.au/afastp. Industry should note that this List of Acceptable Indian treatment providers is not exhaustive, and it is expected that additions will be made. Industry should continue to consult this list on a regular basis. [Click here to access further information.](#)

✦ Changes to AQIS Permit Assessment and Approval Processes

AQIS will be making a number of changes to its permit assessment and approval procedures on 31 July 2006. These changes should simplify the process for Industry and the Public when lodging import permit applications.

The most significant changes are as follows:

The consolidation of Import Permits to Canberra Office

To ensure national consistency and maintain legal integrity, the approval and signing of all import permits will be consolidated to the Canberra office; permits will no longer be issued by the regions.

Amendment to National Co-ordination Centre (NCC) roles

At present, the Timber, Machinery and Fertiliser NCCs are responsible for the assessment, approval and issuing of permits for the commodities they are responsible for. But from 31 July 2006, these NCCs will

only perform the assessment portion of the permit process – the Canberra office will assume responsibility for the approval and issuing of these permits. Industry is advised that import permit applications relating to specific commodities should still be sent to the respective NCCs, and that NCCs will remain as the first point of contact for inquiries.

Transfer of agricultural products from Entry Management & Permits (EMP) to Plant Programs Section

Responsibility for the issuing of permits for agricultural products will be transferred from EMP to the AQIS Plant Programs section. EMP will retain responsibility for permits related to soil samples and water samples. **Click here for further information on the types of products each area will be responsible for after 31 July 2006.**

Implementation of the Permit Application Tracking System (PATS) and e-Lodgements

The aim of these new systems is to streamline the administrative functions associated with the import permit application and tracking process. The eLodgement functionality will allow Industry to submit permit applications electronically, via a link on AQIS's website. The eLodgement facility will be available for all commodities except live animal permits from 14 August 2006. This functionality is expected to be available for live animal import permits in late 2006.

The Permit Application Tracking System (PATS) will be available from 7 August 2006 and will provide AQIS officers with information about the receipt and status of import permit applications. PATS includes all permit applications covering all commodities, not just those lodged electronically by clients. When application forms are submitted, this information will be automatically captured by PATS and will be available to AQIS officers Australia-wide to answer client queries regarding the status of their permit application. Clients will simply need to provide the application reference number to enable the AQIS officer to identify the application within the system.

✦ Development of Revised GAS List

AQIS examines containers and cargo from a number of countries for the presence of the serious quarantine pest, the Giant African Snail (GAS). AQIS is now developing a new list of GAS countries, which will harmonise requirements nationally and respond to the changing status of countries that pose a GAS risk.

There are two GAS country lists currently in operation in Australia. The AQIS GAS Country Action List applies to all Australian states and territories, with a supplementary list applied to containers and cargo for the Northern Territory. AQIS has reviewed these lists, removing several countries that have been identified as having a reduced risk for GAS, as well as commencing a process for considering the addition of several others. **Click here to access the current version of the AQIS GAS Country Action List**, which came into force on 1 July 2006.

Containers and cargo from countries on the current GAS lists, as well as containers stored in contact with these during transit, will be subject to current GAS inspection requirements. The Northern Territory will continue to manage GAS risks through its supplementary NT GAS risk country list until the new national GAS list is implemented.

To facilitate further consideration of the quarantine risk of GAS, AQIS is currently developing a targeted surveillance program. This will involve random inspection of containers and cargo from all countries where GAS has been reported or AQIS has detected GAS on cargo. This means that AQIS will randomly select a targeted number of containers and cargo from countries not on the GAS list for on wharf inspection and, in some cases, follow up inspection by surveillance officers at importers' premises.

✦ Improving AQIS Efficiency and Quarantine Integrity with the "ICE" Program

AQIS commenced Import Clearance Effectiveness (ICE) activities back in late 2005 to verify the effectiveness of its clearance systems, profiling mechanisms, inspections and documentary assessment procedures. Recently, ICE activities were implemented in Tasmania, Far North Qld (Townsville) and Northern Territory. This means that ICE is now operating in all regions of Australia, which will enable AQIS to look for patterns or concerns from a national perspective.

To date, ICE teams have been active in areas such as random surveillance and verification inspections of container cargo which has already been cleared by AQIS. Follow-up inspections of containers that have been through the tailgate process have also commenced. Any quarantine risks that are detected through these verification processes are addressed and data is collated to identify patterns or particular areas of concern. If certain risks are detected on a regular basis, AQIS will use the information to improve its existing profiling systems, and minimise the likelihood of a particular risk not being addressed at point of entry. In the future, the ICE program will be expanded into air cargo, with the aim of having measures of effectiveness for all activities associated with imported cargo. AQIS will work closely with Industry as ICE activities are expanded.

Industry is not charged for ICE inspections, unless items of quarantine concern are identified which require further action. Quarantine concerns detected through surveillance inspections may prompt targeted inspections of subsequent shipments, which will incur AQIS costs on a fee-for-service basis.

Data collected through ICE inspections will contribute to the better use of AQIS resources by targeting areas that represent the highest level of quarantine risk. AQIS appreciates the co-operation and support it has received from industry in performing this important function.

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✦ Summary of documents and alerts released by AQIS Cargo Management in June 2006

| Reference Number | Document | Overview |
|------------------|---|--|
| 1 | <u>Notice to Industry 50, 2005-06</u> | Implementation of the Revised Giant African Snail (GAS) Country Action List |
| 2 | <u>Notice to Industry 51, 2005-06</u> | Update: Revised Implementation of the Revised Giant African Snail (GAS) Country Action List |
| 3 | <u>Notice to Industry 52, 2005-06</u> | Update: Review of AQIS List of "Acceptable" Italian Treatment Providers for Methyl Bromide Fumigations |
| 4 | <u>Public Quarantine Alert (POA) 0455</u> | Determining batches of prawns for WSSV testing |
| 5 | <u>PQA 0479</u> | Restriction on cut flower and foliage imports due to aerial Phytophthora species complex |
| 6 | <u>PQA 0481</u> | Change in the importation requirements for human tissues and fluids |
| 7 | <u>PQA 0484</u> | Changes to import conditions for used fresh water fishing and recreational water equipment |
| 8 | <u>PQA 0021</u> | Manufacturer's declarations - format requirements |

✦ Contact cargobulletin@aqis.gov.au if you have any queries, suggestions or requests for further information

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✦ DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY ✦